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SUBJECT: CG RAISES MONEYLAUNDERING, UNGA WITH NEW ANDORRAN FM,
OPPOSITION LEADER

¶1. (SBU) Summary: CG traveled to Andorra July 26 to call on newly appointed Foreign Minister Meritxell Mateu, meet for the first time with opposition party leader Jaume Bartomeu, President of the Social Democrat group in the Andorran Parliament, and handle an ACS case. Mateu delivered a copy of a diplomatic note (faxed to EUR/WE) requesting agreement for Carles Font, Andorra's Ambassador-designate to the U.S. Mateu and Bartomeu highlighted the close cooperation between the United States and Andorra at the UN and in other international fora, and both sought to reaffirm their commitment to continued cooperation. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Meritxell Mateu, 41, swapped portfolios with former FM Juli Minoves in May after a cabinet shakeup. She told CG one of her priorities would be to bring Andorra closer in line with the world's financial transaction and banking regimes and rid the country of its reputation as a tax haven. She assured the CG that Andorra has ratified all UN anti-terrorism conventions. She will travel to New York with Head of Government (prime minister equivalent) Albert Pintat to attend the UNGA as well as special high-level Conference on climate change ahead of the GA.

In that regard, she expressed appreciation for our note to the Government of Andorra with President Bush's remarks on the administrations new International Framework Initiative. She said Andorra would continue to follow the debate on UN reform, and is likely to send a representative to the ICAO GA in Montreal, September 18-28. She admitted that work still needed to be done on Andorra's CWC/BWC commitments. Finally, Mateu left CG with a copy of a diplomatic note she will be sending shortly requesting agreement for Carles Font, Andorra's choice for U.S. ambassador.

¶3. (U) In her previous position, Minister for Urban Development, Higher Education, and Research Mateu handled the Fulbright program for Andorra. She was Ambassador to Slovenia (2001), Ambassador to Germany (1999-2004), Ambassador to Denmark (1999), Ambassador to the Netherlands (1998), Ambassador to the EU, Belgium, and Luxembourg (1997), and Ambassador to France and Permrep at UNESCO from 1995-97.

¶4. (SBU) Prior to meeting FM Mateu, CG called on Jaume Bartomeu, President of the Social Democratic party and chief rival to Pintat's Liberal Party. Bartomeu worried that the current government was not moving fast enough to address three issues: 1) bringing the country in line with international anti-money laundering standards; 2) clarifying social rights for non-citizens of Andorra, and 3) establishing a smoother relationship with the EU. He expressed appreciation for the

excellent relationship between Andorra and the U.S.

15. (SBU) Comment: The Andorrans are proud of their close relationship with the United States and clearly want to maintain it. Their effort to ratify the UN Terrorism Conventions is a direct outcome of our exchanges on the issue. Likewise, there may be more we could do with them to make their banking system more transparent and less susceptible to criminal activity. Currently, the Andorran banking system remains secretive, and there is a clear sense that government and opposition leaders are worried about the sources of money that might be flowing through it. Both main parties want to take the high ground without giving their rival an advantage on this issue. End Comment.

ROBINSON